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Crypto: Hidden or Secret, from the Greek kruptos meaning hidden

"Then holy St. Nicholas!
All the year,
Our books we will love
And our parents revere;
From naughty behavior
We'll always refrain,
In hopes that you'll come
And reward us again."

Spectator Verse from 1815

Image of a Reindeer; Source Unknown

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His Reindeer Drives This Frosty Night by Craig Heinselman

"Suddenly eight reindeer descend from above, each deer flying with the grace of a dove to the snowy lane in front of the house, making less sound than one wary mouse."

This short statement by a prominent American author named Dean Koontz in November of 1996 marks one of the most recent sightings of what have become known as the flying reindeer. Yes, flying reindeer.

Often tied into the story of Santa Clause (Santeclause, Sancte Claus, St. Nicholas, or whatever connotation of the name from around the world), the flying reindeer have become immortalized through songs, poems and stories throughout the world for nearly two centuries now. But, what inspired these immortal ideas of a reindeer that could fly, what sparked their inclusion into our popular cultures. Were there reindeer that really could fly? Do they still exist in the world today? That is the task at hand, the chronicling of the flying reindeer, a history that when looked at leads credence to the truth behind the tales of Santa Clause's reindeer.

Reindeer are classified as being semi-domesticated caribou (*Rangifer tarandus*). Having been domesticated for at least 5000 years, these animals have a rich history with humans. Pulled from these histories are a number of incidents that can be described as nothing more than sheer amazement, an antlered animal flying through the sky on its own accord. Yes, we could dismiss these accounts as wondrous tales for children and travelers, yet these cases have continued into modern times, with the geographic range of the cases growing every year. On record are instances from Africa, South America and Australia, lands in which no caribou exist in the wild, nor have in the known geologic and fossil records. What then has caused these instances? What are these people seeing?

In the year 1052 on what is now called Banks Island in the northern Arctic, Viking explorers recorded what they saw in the area. While most of these recordings were of common occurrences such as the weather and terrain, there lies within the text of one of these writers works, a Leif Einar, a curious entry.

"At the night time a mystery was seen. At two heads above us an animal went by with out a sound aside from a faint rustle of hair. As it was dark, we did not follow the strange animal. As light arrived though we headed out to seek this animal. At 40 paces from our sight a series of tracks were found stretching further beyond and out of sight, but they stopped at out feet. No storm was around and no new snow had fallen, but the tracks stopped and they did not go further nor did they go back. What the creature was we do not know, only double sliver moon tracks were left of its passing." **— Translated by scholar Ebnar Kwentle from the Norwegian Text**

What animal did Leif Einar and his co-explorers see that night? The height of the animal above them is perhaps a bit difficult to judge from a description of two heads above, but the fact that they traced the tracks back some 40 paces from the sighting indicates that the animal was within but a short space of the men before going into the air. But, what of the sliver moon tracks? It is unfortunate that Leif Einar didn't leave a more detailed dimension, however the local fauna of the area does contain one animal that has moon shaped tracks, the Peary Caribou (*Rangifer tarandus pearyi*).

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The Peary Caribou is the smallest known subspecies of caribou and is nearly pure white to ivory in color. With large hoofs and hollow tubular hair, this caribou is designed exquisitely for surviving the harsh conditions of the arctic. With a limited degree of migration, these caribou remain in the same general geographic area and move from island to island upon ice sheets. Was this the animal Leif Einar saw, a caribou or was it something else?

This case is mentioned first and foremost as it marks the first recorded instance of a possible sighting of this curious animal of the sky. It may be nothing more than a fanciful story, made up by a bored and lonely explorer during a cold harsh night. The location though of the story tells a different view, as over the next 700 years reports of flying animals would sporadically come from this arctic region, and yet from no place else in the world. Leif Einar may have been the first to document his sighting, but he would not be the last.

Another Norwegian explorer in the mid-1300's tells a similar story as Einar did some 300 years earlier. His story, passed on by word of mouth to others tells of an instance on what is called now Bathurst Island.

"I was traveling with three men for much of four years. We traveled far and wide exploring this new land. One summer day we landed on a curious island area. Having grown weary of fish and other water life to eat, we set out to look for some four-legged food. Shortly after setting out we came upon a small group of antlered animals, these we inferred were what some of the local people we had met were called citivolus. This smallish animal stood about 3 feet off the ground and had a splendid set of antlers on its head. The group of animals numbered but 10 or 12, so we swiftly took down two of these animals.

Upon the taking of two animals the remaining group of citivolus took off running. When to the amazement of us all the animals were no longer running, but gliding through the air at a height just above our heads. What manner of flight they could do and how they could do it we could not amass. For fear we quickly took off with our meal and headed back to the shore. What gracious animals these were not to follow or harass us more. In short time we had skinned our prizes and consumed our fill of citivolus."

And so the ancestor of one of these men, a Lars Ecnar, gives a verbal passage of the history of Citivolus to us. Among this history is the mention of a name for these animals, Citivolus, as given by some of the local people of the area.

An Inuit historian from the area of Bathurst Island, Buckley Snieder, has put together a rather interesting explanation of the term and use of Citivolus based from the traditions of one of these local people, the Mallikjuaq.

"The Citivolus were always present on the Island, and always left alone. The possessed the power of birds and the power of man. Their antlers were death to a weary traveler who attempted to feed upon the flesh of a Citivolus, as the animals would raise in the air and go after the traveler until pinning them to the ground with their antlers. Powerful were these animals, and left to be as they had always been, alone. Citivolus it is explained means roughly "the-antler-with-wings-but-no-wings-seen" in the language of the Mallikjuaq. They were feared almost as much as the Cellipse, a wild-man with long hair that lived at the northern edge of the area (near the opening of the May Inlet today). The Cellipse (no literal translation can be made of this word) preyed on the Citivolus using his powerful arms as weapons. The most tell-tale sign that a Cellipse was present was the extremely wide and long footprint (modern Hominology researchers liken the Cellipse to a form of mystery primate, similar to the Yeti of Nepal and the Sasquatch or Bigfoot of North America)."

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These native stories coupled with reports from early explorers leave tantalizing clues as to what was living in the icy arctic. The next piece of evidence comes not from a story or verbal legend, but a wood-carving made in the 1400's. The actual history of this piece is unknown as to source and maker, but chemical dating has set the item at coming from a period of 100 years, 1400 to 1500.

Look above the ship in the image, there appears a form of animal flying with rider. Fanciful art perhaps, but this treasure was discovered on Melville Island, a very close island to Bathurst Island. Discovered in 1975 by Professor Zena Collin, who led her team of archaeologists there to examine early settlements of the Mallikjuaq. She found this piece at the northern point of the island at Site C, a local airstrip equipped village of the area. What was striking about the image was that it depicted a ship akin to the Santa Maria and appearing to date from design work of the ship and craftsmanship to the 1400's. The object above the ship also puzzled her, as why would a flying animal be shown with a man above a ship.

Zena Collins relates the events that follow:

"After finding this object, item number 7455a of the dig, I studied it for some time as how such a ship could have reached the island through the scattered ice sheets was remarkable. A local Katannilik of the village Site C noticed this small carving and made a rather remarkable statement. He mentioned that many years ago a neighboring people had a fear of a flying animal which resembled the modern caribou of the area. They called it Kitivuwus, and left the animal alone even during their worst famines. The Katannilik noted that from recollection there was a story of a white race appearing long ago and taking away many Kitivuwus, as they liked the taste of the animal. The local people of the island (Mallikjuaq of Bathurst Island actually) declared a form of war on these men, as although the feared the Kitivuwus they also cherished it as it kept another creature from harming them, some sort of large hairy bear-man type creature. During this quasi-war the white men were chased off, though they took many of the Kitivuwus with them. Behind these white men left an encampment with various shiny trinkets and stones. The camp was some place on the eastern coast Bathurst Island, a future grant is being sought now to search for this camp and the history behind the mystery ship."

Although none of the evidence is necessarily supportive of the reality of the Citivolus it does offer some tantalizing hints. We have a local people from Bathurst and Melville Islands that mention a creature called *Citivolus* or *Kitivuwus* as well as a from of mystery bipedal creature that preys on these Citivolus. We have loose descriptions of an antlered creature that leaves behind sliver moon tracks and fear in those who seem them. We have a woodcarving from a mystery ship that appears to depict an antlered animal flying through the air.

All told the evidence is weak and stretched out hundreds of years. But, the turning point comes but two hundred years ago and deals with even more lost stories of strange northern animals that appear to avoid gravity by flying without wings, and have a striking resemblance to a small antlered animal that runs on four legs. Taking current and past zoological knowledge, the only animal known to exist on these islands that comes even close to the descriptions given thus far is the caribou, the Peary caribou.

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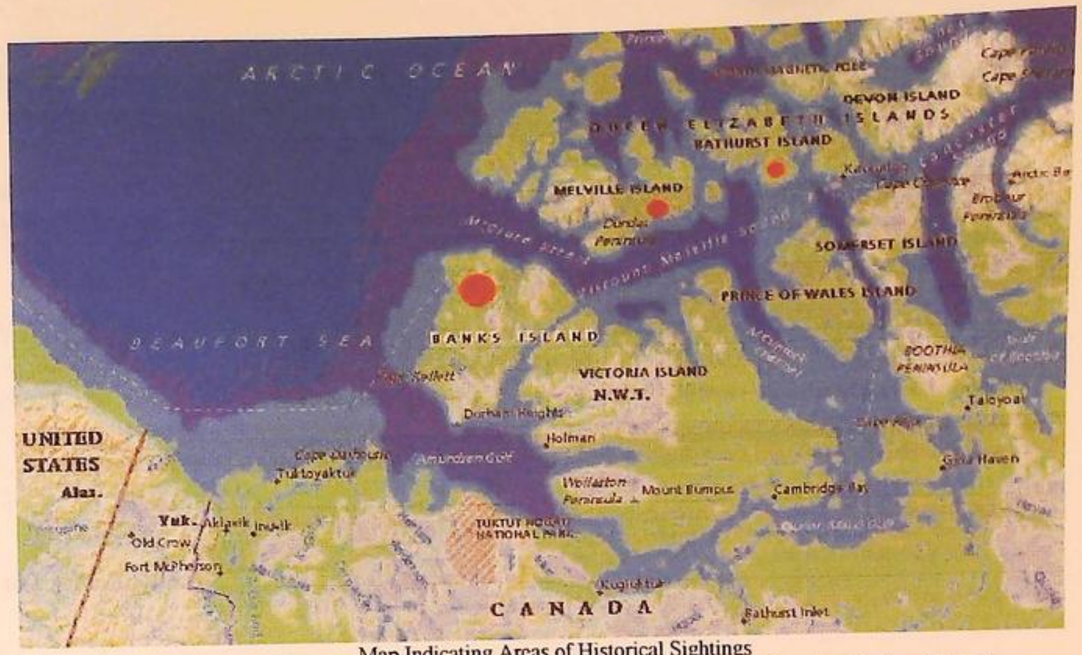

Map Indicating Areas of Historical Sightings
Spots in Red Mark Locations Mentioned in Text: Banks Island, Melville Island and Bathurst Island
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In 1821 there appeared a small booklet of sixteen pages in length. This publication by William Gilley was entitled A New Year's Present, to the Little Ones from Five to Twelve Number III : The Children's Friend. Within its eight engravings the story of a man delivering presents to children was told. The man was Santa Claus, or Santeclaus as his name was put into the book. This Santa was shown and described as having his sleigh pulled by a reindeer:

Through many houses he has been,
And various beds and stockings seen,
Some, white as snow, and neatly mended,
Others, that seem'd for pigs intended.

Where e'er I found good girls or boys,
That hated quarrels, strife and noise,
I left an apple, or a tart,
Or wooded gun, or painted cart.

To some I gave a pretty doll,
To some a peg-top, or a ball,
No crackers, cannons, squibs, or rockets,
To blow their eyes up, or their pockets.

Old Santeclaus with much delight
His reindeer drives this frosty night.
O'er chimneytops, and tracks of snow,
To bring his yearly gifts to you.

The steady friend of virtuous youth,
The friend of duty, and of truth,
Each, Christmas eve he joys to come
Where love and peace have made their home.

No drums to stun their Mother's ear,
Nor swords to make their sisters fear;
But pretty books to store their mind
With knowledge of each various kind.

But where I found the children naughty,
Manners rude, in temper haughty,
Thanklefs to parents, liars, swearers,
Boxers, or cheats, or base take-bearers.

I left a long black, birchen rod,
Such as the dread command of God,
Directs a Parent's hand to use,
When virtue's path his sons refuse.

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Indeed a fascinating account, and the first account to assign Santa Claus to a reindeer and a sleigh, the history behind the poem though is what leads back to the occurrences in the arctic several hundred years before. Although the story published by William Gilley did not have an author assigned, the publisher, Gilley himself, did offer at a latter time a bit behind the stories past. In an interview conducted by Orville L. Holley, the editor of the *Troy Sentinel* (which latter published the well known story, *The Night Before Christmas* in 1823), Gilley states quite clearly where the idea of a reindeer came from in the following interview excerpt from 1822:

"William B. Gilley, a publisher in New York City, recently published a story with a character named Old Santeclaus. Now Sancte Claus has been around for generations, but in America his arrival is more recent with Washington Irving dealing with him in his Knickerboker's History of New York written under the false-name of Diedrich Knickerbocker. True enough Irving's Sancte Claus was St. Nicholas who flies over the roof tops one day a year. No reindeer drew his sleigh, but William Gilley's publication assigns a reindeer to the task of drawing a sleigh.

It was asked of Gilley who wrote the tale, he would not respond as to who the author was. However he was kind enough to offer this statement:

Dear Sir, the idea of Santeclaus was not mine nor was the idea of a reindeer. The author of the tale but submitted the piece, with little added information. However, it should be noted that he did mention the reindeer in a subsequent correspondence. He stated that far in the north near the Arctic lands a series of animals exist, these hooven and antlered animals resemble the reindeer and are feared and honored by those around, as you see he claims to have heard they could fly from his mother. His mother being an Indian of the area."

So Gilley did not write the piece, nor did he offer the name of the author. What he offers though is a tie from New York City all the way back to the northern arctic lands and an animal feared and honored by the natives. Much like the descriptions given by the Mallikjuaq of Bathurst Island and the Katannilik from Melville Island.

The history continues in the 1800's with the publication of Clement C. Moore's *Something About a Visit from St. Nicholas* in the *Troy Sentinel* in December 1823. This story, better known today as *The Night Before Christmas*, featured the addition of seven reindeer to the Gilley sleigh team, and even more history as to why the reindeer were assigned to St. Nicholas. The following is the version of the Moore poem taken from a 1830 carrier's address from the *Troy Sentinel*. It should be noted that although we know Moore penned the poem today, or had help penning it, he did not actually associate his name with the item until 1837 in his The New York Book of Poetry for reason that will become abundantly clear shortly he feared ridicule for what he felt he knew as fact.

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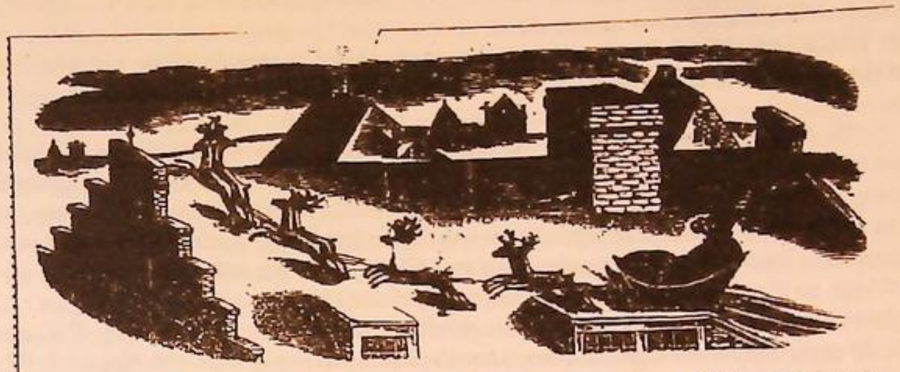

We know not to whom we are indebted for the following description of that unwearied patron of children—that homely and delightful personage of parental kindness—SANTA CLAUS, his costume and his equipage, as he goes about visiting the firesides of this happy land, laden with Christmas bounties; but from whomsoever it may have come, we give thanks for it.—There is, to our apprehension, a spirit of cordial goodness in it, a playfulness of fancy, and a benevolent alacrity to enter into the feelings and promote the simple pleasures of children, which are altogether charming. We hope our little patrons, both lads and lasses, will accept it as a proof of our unfeigned good-will towards them—as a token of our warmest wish that they may have many a merry Christmas; that they may long retain their beautiful relish for those unbought homebred joys, which derive their flavor from filial piety and fraternal love, and which they may be assured are the least alloyed that time can furnish them; and that they may never part with that simplicity of character, which is their own fairest ornament, and for the sake of which they have been pronounced, by Authority which none can gain-say, the types of such as shall inherit the kingdom of heaven.—*Troy Sent'L*

ACCOUNT OF A VISIT FROM ST. NICHOLAS, OR SANTA CLAUS.

'Twas the night before Christmas, when all thro' the house
Not a creature was stirring, not even a mouse;
The stockings were hung by the chimney with care,
In hopes that ST. NICHOLAS soon would be there;
The children were nestled all snug in their beds,
While visions of sugar-plums danced in their heads;
And Mamma in her 'kerchief, and I in my cap,
Had just settled our brains for a long winter's nap;
When out on the lawn there arose such a clatter,
I sprang from the bed to see what was the matter.
Away to the window I flew like a flash,
Tore open the shutters and threw up the sash,
The moon on the breast of the new-fallen snow,
Gave the lustre of mid-day to objects below,
When, what to my wondering eyes should appear,
But a miniature sleigh, and eight tiny rein-deer,
With a little old driver, so lively and quick,
I knew in a moment it must be ST. NICK.
More rapid than eagles his coursers they came,
And he whistled, and shouted, and called them by name;
"Now, *Dasher!* now, *Dancer!* now, *Prancer!* now, *Vixen!*
On, *Comet!* on, *Cupid!* on, *Donder* and *Blixen!*
To the top of the porch! to the top of the wall!
Now dash away! dash away! dash away, all!"
As dry leaves before the wild hurricane fly,
When they meet with an obstacle, mount to the sky;
So up to the house-top the coursers they flew,
With the Sleigh full of Toys—and ST. NICHOLAS too.
And then, in a twinkling, I heard on the roof,
The prancing and pawing of each little hoof—
As I drew in my head, and was turning around,
Down the chimney ST. NICHOLAS came with a bound.
He was dressed all in fur, from his head to his foot,
And his clothes were all tarnished with ashes and soot;
A bundle of Toys was flung on his back,
And he look'd like a pedlar just opening his pack;
His eyes—how they twinkled! his dimples, how merry!
His cheeks were like roses, his nose like a cherry!
His droll little mouth was drawn up like a bow,
And the beard of his chin was as white as the snow;
The stump of a pipe he held just in his teeth,
And the smoke it encircled his head like a wreath;
He had a broad face and a little round belly,
That shook when he laughed, like a bowlfull of jelly.
He was chubby and plump, a right jolly old elf,
And I laughed when I saw him, in spite of myself.
A wink of his eye and a twist of his head,
Soon gave me to know I had nothing to dread;
He spoke not a word, but went straight to his work,
And fill'd all the stockings; then turned with a jerk,
And laying his finger aside of his nose,
And giving a nod, up the chimney he rose;
He sprung to his sleigh, to his team gave a whistle,
And away they all flew like the down of a thistle;
But I heard him exclaim, ere he drove out of sight,
"*Happy Christmas to all, and to all a good night.*"

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Clement C. Moore later wrote in a personal communication to Philip LeMontic in 1840 about the reality behind the story.

"In 1822 I was awakened one night from my sleep at Chelsea House [note: Chelsea House was the homestead of the Moore family in Manhattan, New York] *by an odd sound. Opening the windows I spied a most peculiar sight indeed, a smallish deer in the lawn. The shutters banged on the outside of the house, and I can only imagine this startled that impish creature as it took off at a good pace. Then to my amazement the animal rose into the air with a giant leap, as if pulled by a string like the puppeteer the year last we had for Margaret* [note: Margaret was the oldest of the Moore's six children, being 7 years-old in 1822]. *The animal arose no more than tree height, but stayed at the level until out of my sight. Never shall I forget the sight of that animal, and with the publication of Gilley's Santeclaus the year prior the idea of a reindeer and St. Nick made sense to put in writing for the children, and for my own sake. Never have I spoke of this instance to another, for ridicule must surely come to a man seeing a flying deer."*

Clement Moore the starter and originator of the classic eight reindeer, and the modern flying reindeer myths, spoke his own words as to a wondrous sight he beheld that night. Various other instances from this time frame appear, there was for instance the case of none other than Barnum Bailey offering a $10,000 reward for the capture of a living specimen of the flying reindeer, what he called an *Ariel Equestrian*.

In 1939 an advertising copywriter for Montgomery Ward in Chicago, Illinois (USA) named Robert Lewis May put into writing a humorous anecdote of another flying reindeer. Rudolph, the Red Nosed Reindeer. Yes, most have heard the tale of Rudolph, created as a giveaway to customers in 1939 it has become perhaps the most popular Christmas character after Santa Claus himself especially after being put to song by John David Marks (Johnny Marks) in 1949. May in private correspondence with his brother-in-law, Johnny Marks, mentions a side-show that went through Chicago sometime in the mid 1920's in which a man there exhibited a special deer named Rollo:

"John, Rollo was this animals name. The man said he came from the north and was found on an ice sheet. What was so special about this animal I had asked the man. He said it was a secret, but that for a bit of change I could see the secret. I paid the man the fee and went with him into his exhibit. The room was empty, not an animal in the room. I immediately asked for my money back as there was nothing to see. As I turned to get a response, the man had left but a flicker appeared on the far wall. A motion picture played, in was entitled ROLLO and showed a barren ice sheet with eight deer on it. When out of the corner, with no noticeably camera stop a ninth animal fell from the sky. Smaller than the rest, this ninth creature was pushed to the edge of the ice sheet by the others. Then the film stopped."

Subsequent investigations into who the man was and which carnival or show had this exhibit have come to no avail. As have searches for any other reference to this *ROLLO* film in film libraries, universities and catalogings. Even a subsequent report by another viewer of the film has not come to light. This leaves many questions unanswered.

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During this same period of time from 1830 to 1940, at least 10 documented instances of reindeer sightings have been chronicled from various locals and all with the same description of a smallish deer like animal floating over the ground but leaving physical evidence behind in the form of tracks:

1) A man in Capetown, Africa spied a pair of floating deer one cold morning in 1841
2) A couple 100 miles from Sydney, Australia spy a single floating animal in 1902
3) A young boy and his father report a hovering horned creature from Mexico in 1919
4) A woman from Wellington, New Zealand reports a trio of animals in 1919
5) A family from Dover, Massachusetts spots a silhouetted animal in the sky in 1923
6) A missionary in Tuktoyaktuk, Northwest Territories of Canada collects in four days no less than 30 sightings of an animal by the Inuit people of the area
7) A family from Sacramento, California report a leaping/flying animal in 1928
8) A Swiss pilot reports nearly crashing into a deer at 200 feet while landing in 1935
9) A sea captain in the mid-Atlantic recorded in his journal of circling animals resembling deer on four successive nights seen by his sea hands in 1938
10) A military training team in Southeastern Texas record an incident of deer tracks leading to a fence and then ending, only to start again 1 mile away in 1940.

These incidents are mentioned as they show a worldwide distribution of sightings, unlike those from previous centuries that were isolated to the arctic area. The cause for such wide spread reports is not known, but a speculation can be made that. Due to the slow increase in transoceanic passages in the nineteenth century and the building of public and private zoos in these times, the usage of caribou from the north may have led to the inadvertent capture of one of these aerial versions of the caribou. As the caribou was moved from its home location to points far away, those with this mystery adaptation could quite well escaped unnoticed by taking to the air. Ironically ship manifestos from the era, those available for review, show no loss of livestock unaccounted for. However, this is far from concrete as historically many shippers of the nineteenth century did not keep spotless clerical records for review 100 odd years latter.

The final case to be looked at though is the most startling as it involves the death of a man in West Virginia in 1969. Like the reports from the Arctic of the Citivolus attacking humans, the case of Richard Kemple trampled to death by a hoofed animal in the fields near Wheeling on October 21, 1969 are a reminder that although the animals may appear diminutive they are powerful. The authorities that found Kemple at first believed that the marks on his back were from a horse, as he owned many horses on his small farm. Yet, the local field biologist Mytel Helman made a series of plaster casts of the tracks left as well as analyzed the police record photographs. His investigation lead to the strong possibility that the hoofs found at the scene were not a horses, but rather due to their small quarter moon shape the remnants of a deer tracks. More exactly they appeared to correspond to that of a caribou. This was latter verified by Inuit tracker and hunter Mechel Cetting from Bathurst Island, an expert on the caribou called in by the Wheeling police department. A caribou did indeed exist that fall day, and the hoof prints indicated a fatal meeting occurred.

Most people today do not remember the Kemple case, as it did not get much publicity at its time. However, people today do still remember a little song based off of this tragic event. That song is the cult classic *Grandma Got Run Over by a Reindeer* by Elmo and Patsy .

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Grandma Got Run Over by a Reindeer

Grandma got run over by a reindeer Walking home from our house Christmas eve. You can say there's no such thing as Santa, But as for me and Grandpa, we believe.

She'd been drinkin' too much egg nog, And we'd begged her not to go. But she'd left her medication, So she stumbled out the door into the snow.

When they found her Christmas mornin', At the scene of the attack. There were hoof prints on her forehead, And incriminatin' Claus marks on her back.

Grandma go run over by a reindeer, Walkin' home from our house Christmas eve. You can say there's no such thing as Santa, But as for me and Grandpa, we believe.

Now were all so proud of Grandpa, He's been takin' this so well. See him in there watchin' football, Drinkin' beer and playin' cards with cousin Belle.

It's not Christmas without Grandma. All the family's dressed in black. And we just can't help but wonder: Should we open up her gifts or send them back?

Grandma got run over by a reindeer, Walkin' home from our house Christmas eve. You can say there's no such thing as Santa, But as for me and Grandpa, we believe.

Now the goose is on the table And the pudding made of pig. And a blue and silver candle, That would just have matched the hair in Grandma's wig.

I've warned all my friends and neighbours. Better watch out for yourselves." They should never give a license, To a man who drives a sleigh and plays with elves.

Grandma got run over by a reindeer, Walkin' home from our house, Christmas eve. You can say there's no such thing as Santa, But as for me and Grandpa, we believe.

Although humorous, the song used the West Virginia tragedy as a source of seasonal music.

Historical evidence is present in the culture and heritage of the arctic people. This same heritage regarding the animal known as Citivolus has made it into our popular culture. But, we deal with the reindeer as a cartoon character, a humorous presence during the Christmas Season. Yet, as the Kemple story from 1969 shows, these animals are not a thing to be taken lightly.

How they fly is a mystery. Bill Gilbert a naturalist and author explained how the reindeer, which he believes are specialized Peary caribou, can fly to author Robert Sullivan in 1996:

"After centuries of living in snow-covered lands, the North Pole Peary has developed a hoof every bit as big as that of a St. George's herd caribou. This acts as a kind of snowshoe when he's on the ground, and in the air it acts as a small, solid wing.... Let me start by saying that reindeer are the only antlered animal on earth to have a tinted forehead at the base of the antler – it's a protruding, bony forehead... on the Peary it seems like a massive shelf sticking up from his head. For him, when in flight, it's like a spinnaker on a sailboat – it's an extra sail, banking the wind up and over... Another thing about the antlers – reindeer are one of only three kinds of deer in the world to develop the palmated or broad-ended type of horn. ^This too creates wind resistance and thus loft."

Whether or not Gilbert is right is not the issue. He does claim to have knowledge of where the herds of flying reindeer are and that the government is keeping information quite regarding them because it involves an ancient jolly fellow of the north. Another researcher named Michael McHinley has come to the conclusion that:

"The Citivolus flies, just like a drunk drinks. Actually they occur at the same time."

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So it appears that regardless of how or why these animals fly, or even if they do at all, the truth lies not with Santa Claus (unless what Gilbert and others are saying is true, see Robert Sullivan's Flight of the Reindeer) but with the history of the season. Reindeer are imbedded in out culture these days as characters of a spirit, not of food and clothing like thousands of years ago. We take them for granted as being there every year for us to enjoy, and yet we do not feel they can really fly.

Our children though believe that a reindeer can fly, much like we did as children ourselves. What then stops us all from believing, stops us from seeing the Citivolus in the sky? Do we ever stop believing in them to such a degree as to go blind to their actual existence?

The truth then behind the myth of the flying reindeer, is that it is no myth at all. They exist on this earth. They exist to be enjoyed. They exist as long as there are children to see them, and people to believe.

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Editors Note:

Yes, what you just read was a work of fiction. It mingles reality with unreality to explore the myths of reindeer that fly. The people you met are fictional for the most part as are some of the authors mentioned. However, the story of Santa and the reindeer sleigh did begin in 1821 with the publication of William Gilley's little booklet, and Clement Moore did write his story a few years latter. Washington Irving did use the pseudonym Knickerboker and did mention Santa Claus as well. The locations mentioned are real ones, the events are not. The word Citivolus is a real word, meaning swiftly flying in Latin, wherein the word Cellipse has no known meaning that I know of. Try to figure out what is real and unreal, could be fun. Oh, *Grandma Got Run Over by a Reindeer* is an actual song by Elmo & Patsy, corny but funny.

For further reading it would be suggestible to pick up the real copy of Robert Sullivan's Flight of the Reindeer. It is a wonderfully written and illustrated book that any child would love, detailing the history and travels of Santa and his reindeer to the North Pole. Oh, and yes Dean Koontz did write a Christmas Story called Santa's Twin. In normal Koontz manner it is a twisted and humorous piece with Santa's twin, if you ever see it at a story pick it up the illustrations are well done.

On a more serious note, the idea for this issue was to have some fun using a seasonal favorite, the reindeer. Which have been ironically declining in numbers each year, while their popularity at Christmas time stays the same or grows.

We close this year, decade, century and millennium. Having come so far in our culture and manner, and yet we have lost something along that way. We have lost the wonder of it all. Look around, when was the last time you visited Santa or wished upon a falling star. The look at your children, nieces or nephews and see the wonder in their eyes and hearts. That is what we have lost to ourselves and our generations to come. Wonder.

So reindeer cannot fly. So what. To believe they can, to speculate at the wonder of that possibility is what we are about. We would not have gone to the moon or to another planet if it were not for the wonder of it. The oceans would not be being explored, nor the highest mountain peaks if not for wonder.

Would you be seeking out a mythic creature, thought to not exist by many if not for the wonder and excitement. Bigfoot, Yeti, Yowie, Mokele-Mbembe, Ogopogo, Eastern Cougars, Skunk Apes, Death Worms, Saber-tooth Cats, thylacines and more do not exist to many, but we look and search. Are we then the children, filled with wonder and awe?

Ok, so reindeer cannot fly, that doesn't mean it hurts us to think they could, to retain that one spark of childhood wonder and dreams. To maintain a dignity and sparkle in our eyes as we go beyond, into a new time and new discoveries.

Happy Holidays
& May the New Year Shine Through

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Hominology

Special Number II:

Being an Examination of Unknown Bipedal Creatures

Coming April 2002

Official Invitation to be an Author, Illustrator or Other Contributor

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Authors are sought for any subject dealing with unknown Bipedal Creatures, such as *Sasquatch, Yeti, Yowie, Orang-Pendek, etc.*

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The deadline is March 18, 2002 with scheduled shipping on during the first week of April as well as delivery to the 14th Annual Bigfoot Conference in Newcomerstown, Ohio.

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As financial benefactors are being sought, it is asked that some authors sign an autograph page. These pages will be sent at a latter date, and will be included in the end publication for a certain level of benefactor. It is thought that no more than 100 autograph pages will need to be done. Postage for these will be paid by myself both to you and for you to return the pages.

It is hoped you will partake in this endeavor upon receipt of this invitation. If you have already responded, then please disregard this invitation. However, if you do intend to contribute, and have not notified me, please do so at your earliest convenience.

More of these Special Issues are being planned on a variety of subjects. As they become more formalized new invitations will be sent out to selected authors.

Thanks to All,

Craig Heinselman
Editor/Publisher *CRYPTO*